

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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Mentors, Mentor Substitutes, or Virtual Mentors? Alternative Mentoring Approaches for the Military

by

Stephen B. Knouse, Ph.D.
Alvin and Patricia Smith Professor
University of Southwestern Louisiana

Schuyler C. Webb, Ph.D.
Commander, U.S. Navy
Deputy Director, Directorate of Research
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

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ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of mentoring: the career enhancing and psychosocial functions, the stages of development in the mentoring relationship, and a selective review of the research literature. We argue that the traditional mentoring relationship is difficult to establish and maintain in a military environment for a number of reasons including the rank structure and job environment. Therefore, a number of mentoring alternatives are presented: peer mentors, team mentoring, mentor circles, networking, specialty leaders, retirees, and virtual mentors. Several suggestions for implementing these alternatives in the military follow.

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